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THE GARVARRY.

"He rose—and slowly, sternly, thence withdrew,
Rage in his eye, and threats —" BYRON.

"I'll lave it to my death, Nancy, me or mine never done im or one belongin' to im a pinsworth of harum;" said the Widow Kelly, one day while gossiping at the house of Nancy Brady.

"Nera bit but its a wonder how makes him be so much agin ye," replied Nancy.

"The Lord forgive im, an' every body that leans on the widdy and the orphan, Nancy; but there's one above lookin' at all this," resumed the widow.

"The Mother of God look down on every poor sinner thats in distress," said Mrs. Brady, with a glance of secret satisfaction round her well filled and furnished house.

"Och amin, achiernah," replied the widow, "an' the Lord maintain goodness to every one that has it."

"A then, Mary, mysel doesn't think the masthers a real gentleman at all; the ould sort is ever an' always good to the tenants an' the poor," said Nancy.

"Faix an' ye're not wrong," replied Mary. "I know more about im nor ye can, that's only a new comer; sorra one drop of gentle blood in his body, good or bad."

"Musha is it in earnest ye are," cried Mrs. Brady; and suspending the evolutions of her spinning-wheel, drew her stool closer to that of the widow, who continued.

"Nera word of lie I'm tellin' ye, shure I'm lookin' at im since he was the bulk of a sod of turf."

"Well, well," replied Nancy, "an' as grand as he is."

"Troth an' its jist so," resumed the widow. "His father was a poor man, an' lived out of the end of the house* wid my father, God rest his sowl an' as I hard, for I wasn't very big at the time, Paddy Brian had'n't cow or calf."

"Its lek that's this man's father," interrupted Mrs. Brady.

"Yis dear, yis, his father shure enough; an' they say a coire (kind, friendly,) man he was, that struggled hard to rear the family."

"An' what way did they get all the riches?"

"Ner a one of me knows; some says the man here, that's Jemmy we used to call im, got a purse of money in a fair green; more says they ketched a leprehaun;† an' more that its what they got a crock of gould in undher a big stone on the bottom of an ould ditch."

"Any way they have the money," said Mrs. Brady.

"Sorra doubt," replied the widow, "an' cute enough they wer in the beginnin' gettin' up by degrees muryagh, (as it were,) until they tuk land, an' got cows, an' calves, an' sheep, an' horses."

"O wirra what luck some has beyant others," cried Nancy, with a long drawn sigh; "but Mary, dear, how did the man here get it all?"

"Ye see a hegar, he was ever an' always cute, so afore they let an to have money, he got the brothers an' sisters all marret an' out of the way; the ould couple died—he left the place, tuk this land an' built the house, an' from plain Jemmy Brian, he's now James O'Brian, Esquire?"

"Its lek, Mary, ye're from the same place."

"Sure, dear, didn't I tell ye his father lived out of the end of the house wid us?"

"I mind ye did; an' to be shure ye cum wid im to this land."

"No, avourneen, I was marret an' livin' here long afore he got it, forreer that iver he cum to it at all."

This man's rise in life had been fully as sudden as described by the Widow Kelly; how he came by the means was only known to himself, though various rumours were afloat relative to it. He took leases of large tracts of land, which he again set to others, and became an extensive middle-man, as they are termed in Ireland.

* Living out of the end of a house, means that one cabin is joined to the other.

† A leprehaun is said to be a lilliputian figure, with a scarlet coat and red night cap. If any person could be fortunate enough to lay hold on one of those beings, he would be made rich, for they have an intimate knowledge of concealed treasure;

Though an illiterate man, Brian was clever; and as wealth poured in, he became haughty and overbearing; he wished to have his humble origin forgotten, but the residence of Kelly's wife on his land was a bar to that, and like the wicked Haman, his wealth and affectation of gentility availed him nothing, so long as Mary Kelly lived near to remind him of what he had been; it was a canker to all his enjoyment. But though in other respects a clever man, in this instance Mr. Brian acted foolishly; instead of conciliating this woman, he took every opportunity of oppressing and irritating her, trying all means to get them off his land but in vain. At length Kelly died, and the unrelenting landlord resolved to get rid of the widow. His cruelty need not be detailed; suffice it to say he succeeded in turning the poor woman and her son adrift on the world; and he chuckled in the idea that all traces of his origin would now be obliterated.

But the Mighty Being who has said, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me," did not forsake this victim of oppression. A farmer in the neighbourhood, though far from rich, and with a large family, could not look at this act of cruelty, in the depth of winter, unmoved. He gave the widow a cabin with a small garden, and took her son into his employment, and thus defeated O'Brian's plan of sending her out of the country. She endeavoured to assist her son in supporting themselves, by spinning, and buying sheep skins in the season, the wool of which she sold at the different markets in the neighbourhood. At this period Pat, the widow's son, was a lad of seventeen, sober and well conducted, esteemed by all who knew him.

Some short time after the conversation above-mentioned between the widow and Mrs. Brady, the latter lost a grown up son; and as they were people considered well to do in the world, crowds came to the wake, knowing it would be a plentiful one, and they were not disappointed, saying to each other, "Any way Phil Brady was givin his little boy a raul decent wake, an no doubt there'd be a fine funeral."

Now Nancy Brady, who sat at the head of the table on which the body of her son was laid out, declared to all who addressed her with the unvarying salutation, "I'm sorry for yer throuble;" that "the heart idin her was broken' out an' out; and och, och, what did she do to desarve such a crish!" But still Mrs. Brady could cry with the criers, smoke with the smokers, and talk with the talkers.

As the persons, conduct, and affairs of their neighbours, usually form the subject of conversation among the lower orders, and indeed to their shame be it recorded, even of many in the higher classes of life, on the second night of the wake, one subject that occupied a group of idlers around Mrs. Brady, was Mr. Brian and his family.

"A then d'ye tell me so, Darby," said a man, at the same time handing him a pipe; "an' they're of that great lord's family; friends no doubt?" (Friends, as thus used, means relations.)

"Sorra word of lie in id, Ned," replied Darby, "I hard the masther tellin' id to a gentleman."

"What's that ye hard, Darby?" asked Mrs. Brady, who only caught the latter part of what he had said.

"The masther tould a gentleman, an' I by," replied Darby, "that he's related to the great lord of the same name that lives some place in Munster."

"Nough more a rubblul than ig ma chauth," (what a tail my cat has,) exclaimed Nancy; "related to a lord, anagh" (an expression of doubt and scorn).

"An' why nat," exclaimed another woman, "some of the lords themselfs is no great things."

"Great things here or there," replied Mrs. Brady, "sorra one drop of lord's blood in his body."

"How d'ye know, did ye ever see the colour of id?" asked Darby.

"No nor yersel, no more nor me, avourneen," she answered; "an' after all its truth I'm tellin'."

"Maybe ye know; as they know the horses, be the mark of mouth," returned Darby.

"No, dear, nor as ye know the sheep," she retorted; "an' faix its asy to know the good ould stock, the raul blood, from the upstart."

"Sure, Nancy Brady, ye wouldn't be afther allegatin' (affirming) sich a thing of the masther," said Darby.

"What?" she demanded.

"That he's an upstart."

"Mind it was yersel said id, Darby Dolan," interrupted Mrs. Brady; then in a lower tone she addressed the woman next her; "an' may be if it was sed its no lie."

"Why so?" asked the woman.

"Bekase," replied Nancy, and she entered into a half whispering detail of the conversation she had with the Widow Kelly.

Darby, who was Mr. Brian's shepherd, and pretended to be greatly attached to him, listened intently, and hearing some half sentences, exclaimed, "This is more of Mary Kelly's lies an' stories; may I never die in sin but she'll be sorry fur id yet."

"What lies?" said Mrs. Brady. "Who knows what Mary Kelly tould me?"

"Many's the one'll know id the night," replied Darby; "but mind I tell ye, that gabby lyin' hag'll be sorry, an' may be more wid her."

"Christ chriestha er in! Darby," said Nancy, "sure ye wouldn't go for to tell the masther that I sed any thing agin' u. Och, och, God forbid avourneen; an' I didn't think it no harum to tell what Mary Kelly sed on my own fire."

"Sed here or sed there," replied Darby, after having heard all and much more than was advanced by the widow, "I wondher, Nancy Brady, ye'd sit by an' listen to sich lies of a man that's givin' ye good bread."

A day or two after the wake, the shepherd took the opportunity of his master looking at some sheep, to enter into conversation. After the usual commendations of the stock, and praises of his own carefulness, he began:—"That was a sore crish the Bradys got, sir, God look on them."

The master gave an assenting nod, and Darby continued. "An' maybe they had'n't a great wake an' a fine funeral, sir, God rest the poor boy's soul."

"Had they," was the concise reply.

"Well, well, sir, any way but the women's gabby; mysel never hard the like's of them fur lies and stories."

"What lies and stories, Darby?" said Mr. O'Brian, seating himself in an attitude that the shepherd well knew was the prelude to a regular gossip; for though usually keeping his people at a great distance, there were times when Mr. O'Brian could lay aside his dignity, and return to his old vulgar habits; and the servants knew how to lead him to this; for it is astonishing how quick sighted they in general are to the foibles of their employers. Darby did not reply till his master had repeated the question, then with a knowing shake of the head, he answered, "Faix it'd be onpossible to mind the half of what a body hears, an' God knows there was a power of talk at the wake."

O'Brien perceiving the shepherd had something to tell, remarked, "But sure, Darby, you might remember part of what you heard; no doubt the women were talking of their neighbours."

"Ye may say that any way, sir; and maybe of them id didn't become them to mintion. Musha what mather to me or the like's of me who a body's related to, or about family at all at all."

"Was there any person speaking of my family?" interrupted Mr. O'Brian, for on this point he was very sensitive.

"There's no use in talkin, sir; any way, ye may defy the gabbiest in the parish."

But O'Brien's curiosity was completely aroused, and he insisted on knowing what was said. This was just the point the wily shepherd wished to bring him to; and, with seeming reluctance, he told all, and much more than the Widow Kelly had said to Nancy Brady, and also that it had been a public subject of conversation at the wake.

Scarce able to articulate, so much was he overcome with rage and mortification, Mr. O'Brien declared that he would give fifty pounds, nay, a hundred, to have it in his power to punish Mary Kelly.

"An' sure ye can do id for very little, sir," said Darby. "Can't ye put her in the Bishop's coort, for diffamation an'

lies;" and, at the same time, he put his tongue on the other side of his cheek.

To this gibeing speech, the master made no reply; but, on turning away, he reiterated his former declaration that he would do any thing to punish the Kellys, and drive them from the country.

Immediately after this, there was a new subject of conversation in the neighbourhood; two of Mr. O'Brian's fat sheep had been stolen; and Darby, according to his own account, said nothing of it for a week, until he searched the bounds, and made every inquiry, but to no purpose. It may be imagined the master was greatly exasperated; he insisted his people should clear themselves. With one voice, they all declared they would take the Garvarry* on their innocence. "And the Garvarry you shall certainly take," said O'Brian; "I'll send for it this day."

A young man, who witnessed the swearing, was thus costed by his mother, on his return:—"Well, Jack, ye wor at Mr. O'Brian's the day."

"Yes," replied he; "an' a sore place it was. The Garvarry cum in it (was brought there), an' great swearin there was."

"Musha, Jack, dear," said another, "what sort of a thing is id at all?"

"The very moral (model) of a walking staff, only longer, an' a crook of brass on the top, wid an ugly smush (face) on id. O wirra! if ye seen it!"

"An' they say," remarked a third, "that if a body swears in the wrong wid that about his neck, his face'll be turned to the back of his head, God bless the mark!"

"Sorra word of lie ye heard," replied Jack.

"A-then, did Darby Dolan put it in his nick?" asked the young man's mother.

"Sure enough he did," said Jack.

"Well, well!" she replied, "but that bates the little dish! The Lord keep us, any way!"

"What makes ye say that?" inquired her son.

"Nothin, dear—och, nothin, avourneen.—God forbid I'd say anythin of c'er a one."

"Is'n't them two fine skins I bought for ye," said Pat Kelly, to his mother one evening, after returning from work.

"Ne'er a better, acushla," she replied; "there's great work on them; from who did ye buy them?"

"Sorra one of me knows—I never seen him afore."

"Well, the morrow, God willin, I'll go to the market, an' its little of the wool I'll have back wid me; an' then, Pat, a hashki† ye can buy a new breeches at the fair."

"Ne'er a one of me very bad for them mother; its yersel wants a cloke comin on the winther. Sorra stitch I'll buy till ye get it."

"Och! the Mother of God reward ye, avourneen, that always thinks more of the old woman nor yersel. Och! the Lord forgive the man that left the widdy an' the orphan this a way."

"Never heed, mother; he'll not be a pinsworth better, nor we worse, the last day, for this."

"Och! Pat, alanna ma chru (child of my heart), the Lord fit an' prepare uz for that day, any way."

"God 'save all here!" said Darby, who entered at the same moment.

"God save ye, kindly," replied the widow. "Wont ye cum by to the fire, Darby."

"Sorra bit of me could, Mary; id's a fine evening, thank God. The woman wants a couple of pound of wool; have ye e'er a grain."

"There isn't two better skins in the counthry nor the little boy bought yesterday;" and she brought forth one to show the length of the wool.

"I'll tell the woman," said Darby, and left the house.

He had not been long gone, when Mr. O'Brien and another man returned with him, demanding entrance to

* St. Barry's Staff, commonly called the Garvarry, it is firmly believed can detect perjury, and that whosoever has the hardihood to swear falsely with it around his neck, is punished by having his face disfigured, so that few are found bold enough to perjure themselves on the Garvarry.

† A term of endearment.

search for stolen goods. The poor widow was thunder-struck, and could scarcely say, "Cum in; the nera haporth ever we stole."

"Who says there's any thing stole here?" cried Pat, seizing and brandishing a stick. "I'll tell them to their teeth they're liars."

"Asy, Pat, alanna—asy, avourneen; don't do any thing rash; let them come in; what do we care, an' nothin they want here?" said the widow holding her son's arm.

"Come, come, fellow," cried Mr. O'Brian, "we have a warrant to enter. Constable, do your duty."

The constable entered, and seizing on the sheep-skins, took them to Mr. O'Brian, who, pointing to the letters, J. O'B., with which they were branded, said they were his property.

"They're mine; I ped for them," replied Pat.

"You'll answer that to the Justice," said the constable; so come along."

And taking Pat by the arm, with Darby carrying the skins, they set out to the magistrate, who lived within a short distance. Here both O'Brian and his shepherd identified the skins; and, as the young man could not tell who he had bought them from, he was committed to prison, to abide his trial for stealing sheep, the skins of whom were found in his possession.

"And now," thought O'Brian, "I'll at last get rid of this woman and her son; he will, at all events, be transported for life."

It would be vain to attempt a description of what the widow Kelly suffered during the period that elapsed between her son's imprisonment and the assizes. Most people thought his conviction certain, because he could not prove the purchase of the skins, or who he bought them from. Pat Kelly bore an excellent character, and was pitied by the whole neighbourhood. They knew O'Brian's dislike to the widow; and there were some who feared this was a plan laid by wicked people to gratify him by having them sent out of the country.

The wretched mother ceased not night and day to implore the succour of heaven. "Och!" she would say, "we have no other dependence now. My boy, my fine boy, that never did nothin out of the way, to be murdered this a-way!" And Nancy Brady constantly affirmed that, "only they all tuk the garvarry, she'd say some of the min about the land done id; but sure, if they did, their face id be turned round, the Lord save every one!"

So that, though all thought Pat Kelly innocent, they agreed that appearances were greatly against him. "An' God look on poor Mary!" they said; "she'll not live one day after him."

"Good news! good news!" cried a young man, son to the farmer under whom the widow Kelly lived, rushing into the house almost out of breath. "Good news! Poor Pat Kelly's freed; he's innocent." He could utter no more.

"God be thanked!" said his mother; "the widow and orphan, as well as the innocent, are in His blessed keeping: I knew the poor boy had no hand in it. But how was he cleared, Harry?"

"Its little short of a miracle, mother; you'll hardly believe me when I tell you." And he went on to narrate the incidents which were briefly thus:—A man, who lived not far from O'Brian's, was, on the evening previous to the assizes, sitting at the fire with his wife; he appeared to labour under much uneasiness; she asked what ailed him, and he replied, by desiring her to go into the room for a little, and not come out until he called her. She wondered at this, but obeyed. Now, the room was a small space, close to the fire, the partition wall of which was little more than breast high. The woman had scarcely got inside this frail inclosure, when the man, in a tolerably loud voice, began thus:—

"Wall! dear wall! listen to me, an' mind every word I say. I'm in great trouble, wall; there's somethin on my mind that I swore not to tell to man or woman; but, wall, dear, I'll tell id t'ye. Och, och! wall, I'm afeard the Widdy Kelly's little boy'll be kilt for stealin them sheep, and he not doin id at all. Darby Dolan is the man that done id;

I'll leave id to my death, wall, but he is; he kilt the sheep, an' tuk the meat to a fair, an' he swore me to bring the skins to a market, an' get a strange man to sell them to Pat Kelly, an' no one else; for he heard the masher say, he'd be bether pleased nor twenty sheep to get somethin agin them Kellys, to hunt them, like red shanks, out of the country, bekase Mary Kelly cud tell he was no gentleman. An' this is the truth, wall, dear; an' ids but little Darby giv me for helpin 'im; but, och! I'll never go to heaven if anythin is done to the poor boy, an' me knowin all about id. So, wall, dear, save 'im if ye can; it'll save my poor sowl, an' I'll leave ye my blessin.'"

The woman lost no time in taking the necessary steps to save Kelly. Darby was apprehended on the above testimony, and convicted; he made no defence; and, to the joy of the whole court, a very severe sentence was passed upon him.

Mr. O'Brian was so much ashamed of the whole transaction, that he left the country for some time, and ceased to persecute the widow, who, with her son, was more than ever respected by the neighbours. And, from this circumstance, the Garvarry fell considerably in the estimation of the upholders of its infallibility. W.

* The murderers of a gentleman in the County of —, were discovered by a man's telling the circumstances to the wall, his wife being within hearing.

VALENTINE GREATTRACKS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

SIR—Mr. Valentine Greattracks, the subject of a biographical sketch in your 51st number, well merited a place in a national work such as yours. His character, independent of his extraordinary faculty of healing, was amiable and interesting; and I have known men of superior qualifications and of philosophical minds, who considered the evidence of his actual possession of this faculty to be too well authenticated to be doubted or disputed. I know no person of his name now in existence; but some years since there was living in the county of Waterford a Miss Greattracks, a descendant of Mr. Greattracks, who was married to a Mr. Ronayne, I believe, a relation of the present member for Clonmel. There was also another descendant, a Miss Greattracks, the daughter of a Captain Greattracks, married to a Portuguese gentleman of the name of Sampayo, some years since the Portuguese consul for Cork, in which city he realised a large property in business. This gentleman is still living in London or its neighbourhood, but continues to be a liberal benefactor to the public charities of Cork. Two of the family, his brothers, I believe, have been ennobled in Portugal, one under the title of Baron Sampayo, the other of Baron Terceira. I do not know whether Mr. Sampayo has a son or not, but he had several daughters residing in this country, one of whom became the second wife of William Howe Hennis, Esq. whose death was announced in the papers a few days since, at Fermoy House, County of Cork—perhaps hastened by the account of the fatal duel at Exeter, in which his eldest son was killed, under circumstances which produced a great sensation at the time.

These are all my present recollections of the family of Greattracks, which as far as they are suited to public notice, are at your service. As I propose paying a visit to the south shortly, I may perhaps acquaint myself with other circumstances relative to Mr. Greattracks, as well as other interesting Irish characters: but many events have passed into oblivion, well worthy of being remembered, from the want of a national depository, in which to notice and record Irish genius and Irish worth. R. T. H

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